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THE SITUATION IN
BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fiftieth year

Letter dated 29 March 1995 from the Permanent Representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Pursuant to President Alija Izetbegovic's letter of 22 March 1995 to you, we would highlight the following considerations as part of a review of the United Nations mandated operations in the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Although we would not want to limit such a comprehensive review to just these points, we do assess that they should be addressed with the highest urgency while necessitating no changes in the current Security Council authorization:

1. The "lifeline" to Sarajevo, the 'blue route", transects exclusively Government-controlled territory and a few hundred metres of runway that is controlled by the United Nations under its mandate. Yet, this lifeline is closed at the demand of Serbian forces on the theory that the Pale Serbs must be in agreement with its being opened. This runs counter not only to logic, but also to existing Security Council mandates including resolutions 752 (1992) and 824 (1993), 836 (1993) and 900 (1994) (which specially designate Sarajevo as a "safe area" to be free of this type of strangulation). We therefore request that the United Nations forces assume responsibility, as is consistent with their mandate, to keep the blue route open regardless of Serbian agreement thereto. The Pale Serbs cannot be allowed to maintain their stranglehold on the city.

2. The key access road from Sarajevo to Sarajevo airport has been interrupted by the deployment of a Serbian checkpoint at a key intersection. This is inconsistent with Security Council resolutions 758 (1992) and 761 (1992) on opening and placing the airport under United Nations control as well as the agreement signed on that point by the Government of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina with the United Nations as well as the Pale Serbs with the United Nations.

3. The Security Council on numerous occasions, and in particular in its resolutions 824 (1993), 836 (1993), 900 (1994), 913 (1994) and others, has stressed the importance it places on and has given the necessary authority for fully lifting the siege of Sarajevo and maintaining the city's centuries old role as a multi-ethnic, united, integrated and free city. Unfortunately, almost three years after it was initially shelled, Sarajevo remains besieged with its own citizens subjected to deprivation, suffering, sniping, shelling and murder despite the numerous resolutions to the contrary and its status as a safe area and exclusion zone. The committed efforts of Mr. William Eagleton, the Secretary-General's Special Coordinator, various non-governmental organizations and national organizations and the Government of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina to proceed with the rebuilding and reconciliation of the city, as demanded by resolutions 900 (1994) and 913 (1994), have been thwarted by the Serbian forces and the continuing tolerance of this siege.

4. The civilian populations of the Srebrenica, Zepa, Gorazde and Bihac safe areas are systematically deprived of the essentials of life by the besieging Serbian forces. According to the United Nations own reports, 20 per cent of the population of Bihac is at risk of starvation. Furthermore, while some food is allowed to pass, the Serbians have resorted to denying selectively certain less prominent essentials such as vitamins, mineral nutrients, medicines or even soap and toothpaste. As a further cruel example of systematic deprivation, Srebrenica's only surgeon, a non-national, is denied return to the town despite commitments to the contrary. There is a strategy of committing genocide by the pruning method. The Serbians hope to accomplish their crime by cutting down snippets of human life not noticeable to an increasingly disengaged international community until the entire tree of human life in places like Srebrenica has been eradicated.

5. Despite numerous reminders about the Geneva Conventions and calls upon Serbian military and political leadership to halt and reverse their practice of ethnic cleansing, these crimes continue as cited by your report of 22 March 1995, abated only by the rapidly decreasing number of potential human victims.

6. Once again, according to your report of 22 March 1995, the so-called Krajina Serbs continue to violate our international border as well as the status of the United Nations protected area zones within the Republic of Croatia by their direct involvement in the assault upon Bihac. We request that modalities be established to cease these violations of our territorial integrity and sovereignty emanating from across our international border from areas ostensibly under United Nations control.

7. As outlined already in our letter of 28 March 1995, the recent Serbian deployment of new anti-aircraft systems through much of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina is a direct challenge to the United Nations and its mandate in our Republic and a threat to those individuals executing that mandate. It is the most serious factor causing the greatest deterioration in the humanitarian, military and political environment in our Republic at least over the last year.

We continue to believe that the above most urgent issues should be addressed immediately as the initial part of a more comprehensive review. We

remain of the firm view that modalities and a time-frame must be established for this review. We would propose that the Secretary-General issue a report to the Council within six weeks regarding the issues raised herein as the initial part of the comprehensive review.

Finally, as we seek to envision a more effective United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR), we wish to express our appreciation to the United Nations-mandated personnel and humanitarian forces already on the ground for their well-intentioned and directed efforts within the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as to pay tribute in particular to those who have given their lives in the performance of their duties.

May I ask for your kind assistance in circulating this letter as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 39, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Muhamed SACIRBEY
Permanent Representative